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**PRESS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHANNEL MIGRATION ZONE STUDY FOR PRICKLY PEAR & TENMILE CREEKS**

**HELENA-** The Lewis & Clark County Water Quality Protection District and the County Community Development and Planning office are holding a public meeting on January 20, at 6:30 pm at the MACo Building (2715 Skyway Drive) to review the Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) study and map. The study was recently concluded on Prickly Pear Creek and the lower portion of Tenmile Creek within the County. The presentation will be part of a regular Lake Helena Watershed Group meeting that evening.

The public is encouraged to attend this meeting and presentation. The purpose of the study was to determine where historically the creek has been and where it is likely to migrate in the future. County Planner, Rebecca Shaw stated "After reviewing the results of this project I was surprised how much the creeks move."

The study and resulting map was developed by examining a series of historic aerial photographs of the stream corridor starting in 1955 to the present. From the photos the authors were able to measure erosion, lateral migration, and avulsion or new stream channel creation. Prickly Pear and Tenmile Creek are laterally dynamic streams that flow into the Helena Valley on alluvial fan surfaces that are prone to both migrating horizontally and avulsion or creating a new stream channels during a flooding events.

The concept of CMZ mapping is to identify the corridor area that a stream channel or series of stream channels that can be expected to occupy over a given timeframe. For this study, a 100-year CMZ was developed. The study area's CMZ includes the area of historic channel occupation as defined by the photographic record, the area outside of this historic channel area that is susceptible to channel migration or mass wasting, and floodplain areas susceptible to abrupt channel relocation.

Some of the potential uses of these CMZ maps are to identify future problem areas based on active bankline migration, background information to assess channel dynamics within a given area, assist the development of river corridor best management practices, and improve general understanding of the physical behavior of these two creeks. The presentation will be made by the study authors, Tony Thatcher of DTM Consulting, Inc. and Karin Boyd, PG of Applied Geomorphology. Discussion will follow the presentation.

For more information on the CMZ study, please call 457-8927.

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"To Preserve, Protect, and Improve Water Quality Within District Boundaries"